

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PARIS 23273 101907Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6962
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION NATO

S E C R E T PARIS 23273

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO NPG
SUBJ: ALLIED ATTITUDES ON NEUTRON BOMB

REF: (A) STATE 184569; (B) PARIS 22403

1. WE HAVE HAD SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT GOF MAY NOT
SHARE THE CONCERNS OVER THE NEUTRON BOMB WHICH HAVE
SURFACED ELSEWHERE. ON THE CONTRARY, WHEN THE ISSUE
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CAME UP AT AMBASSADOR'S LUNCH WITH FOREIGN MINISTER DE
GUIRINGAUD ON AUGUST 8, GUIRINGAUD EXPRESSED THE VIEW
THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB WOULD INCREASE THE CREDIBILITY OF
THE US DEFENSE POSTURE IN WESTERN EUROPE. FROM THE
STANDPOINT OF WESTERN DETERRENCE, HE SAID IT WOULD BE
A VERY GOOD DEVELOPMENT.

2. OTHER SCATTERED OFFICIAL COMMENTS TO US HAVE REINFORCED THIS SO FAR POSITIVE REACTION. FOR INSTANCE, TWO MATIGNON FOREIGN AFFAIRS STAFFERS TOLD EMBOFF THIS WEEK THAT, AS FAR AS THEY KNEW, GOF WAS "QUITE RELAXED" OVER THE NEUTRON BOMB. ISSUE, OF COURSE, WAS "COMPLEX AND WOULD NEED CAREFUL STUDY." COMMENTS TO SAME EFFECT WERE RECENTLY MADE TO EMBASSY BY A SENIOR FRENCH ARMY STAFF OFFICER CONCERNED WITH NUCLEAR QUESTIONS.

3. PUBLIC AND PRESS REACTION TO THE NEUTRON BOMB ISSUE REMAIN LIGHT AND HAVE NOT EVOLVED SIGNIFICANTLY BEYOND REPORT SUBMITTED REF B. ONLY EXCEPTION IS MODEST PRESS PLAY OF A JOINT PROTEST JUST PUBLISHED BY A NUMBER OF EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES.

4. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUSLY HAZARDOUS TO REACH PRECISE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT PRESENT AND POSSIBLE FUTURE GOF ATTITUDES ON THIS QUESTION WITHOUT EXPLORING IT MORE DIRECTLY AND OVER TIME. WHILE THE FRENCH ARE RELAXED AT PRESENT, THE ISSUE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR EUROPE, WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RECEIVE FURTHER STUDY AT HIGH LEVELS, PERHAPS ALONG LINES OF QUESTIONS POSED BY AMBASSADOR DE ROSE (REF B). THE MATTER WILL CERTAINLY BE THE SUBJECT OF BILATERAL EXCHANGES WITH GERMANS AND OTHER EUROPEAN PARTNERS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHAT MORE DETAILED CONCLUSIONS GOF WILL REACH IN THIS PROCESS.

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TO ASSURE THAT FRENCH THINKING STAYS ON RAILS, IT WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO KEEP GOF CLOSELY INFORMED OF OUR EVOLVING RATIONALE AND PLANS, PARTICULARLY BEFORE FINAL DECISIONS ARE ANNOUNCED.

5. AS FOR FRENCH PUBLIC REACTION, IT TOO COULD STILL BECOME MORE ENGAGED. FOR INSTANCE, THE STRONG CURRENT PROTEST AGAINST DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER COULD SPILL OVER ON THIS ISSUE. INDEED THIS MAY WELL BE ONE OF THE PURPOSES OF THE CAMPAIGN WHICH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PCF, ARE TRYING TO WHIP UP -- PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT OT FAVOR NUCLEAR POWER. SO FAR, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE HAD LITTLE SUCCESS.

HARTMAN

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